

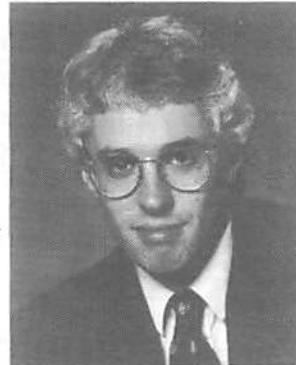
Literacy B.C. NEWSLETTER

April 1998

Volume 4, Number 1

A Message from the Minister

Andrew Petter was appointed Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology on February 24, 1998.



April 1998

Dear Literacy B.C.

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to serve as Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. I am very excited about this new portfolio, and look forward to working with Literacy B.C. to improve literacy throughout the province.

Education and training are top priorities for our government. At a time when other jurisdictions have slashed education funding, we have increased funding over the past seven years. While tuition fees have skyrocketed in many parts of Canada, leaving students with enormous debt loads, our government has taken action to improve access to post-secondary education. We have frozen tuition fees for three years and created 13,000 new spaces for students.

This is a record I want to build on. Investing in education is key to the future success of learners and the future prosperity of our province. In particular, I am committed to making adult basic education a priority by ensuring that it is more accessible and affordable.

I am looking forward to working with you in achieving these important goals.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Andrew Petter".

News from MAETT...

Audrey Thomas has been confirmed in the position of Education Officer, Developmental Programs, for the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT), Colleges and Program Planning Branch.

This position, which takes effect on April 6, 1998, is now a regular government (FTE) position. The positions of ABE Coordinator (since 1987) and Literacy Coordinator (since 1989) have always been seconded/contract positions.

Audrey started with the then Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour in November 1994 as the Literacy Coordinator. Since July 1, 1997,

when the Literacy and ABE Coordinator's positions were combined, Audrey has had responsibility for both of these program areas. Her new position includes both literacy and ABE.

In 1989, The Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee (PLAC) Report called for the conversion of the literacy coordinator's position into a regular government position.

Audrey Thomas
Education Officer, Developmental Programs
Colleges and Program Planning Branch
Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology
PO Box 9877 Stn Prov Gov't
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9T6
(Location: 835 Humboldt Street)

Email: Audrey.Thomas@gems5.gov.bc.ca
Phone: (250) 387-6174
Fax: (250) 952-6110

Literacy Research in Practice - Beginning a BC Network

by Audrey Thomas

Literacy research has had a low profile at the regional and local level in British Columbia. In recent years, much money has gone into macro-studies such as LSUDA* (Statistics Canada, 1989), and IALS** (1995 and 1997). Provincially, several solid reports have been produced on various themes through the federal-provincial adult literacy cost-shared fund and other Ministry

programs. In addition, the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) has funded demonstration projects in BC.

The NLS held a research policy conversation in February 1996, and has recently produced a Literacy Research Framework paper. Some initiatives have already emerged across Canada from this event. At the Project Literacy Victoria

continued on page 3

* LSUDA = Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities. ** IALS = International Adult Literacy Survey

News from MAETT...

"Literacy Research" from page 3

Investing in the Future Forum in November, 1997, two round-tables were held to test the level of interest in problem-solving literacy research. Much enthusiasm was expressed by those present.

A follow-up working day was held in Vancouver on February 6 this year. About 18 people met in order to explore interests and ideas further. The event was organized and hosted by MAETT in co-operation with the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology. Invitees were participants in the November round tables and others currently involved in literacy research through NLS/cost-shared funding.

Sharing of ideas, information, concerns and procedures were part of the day. There was a feeling that more attention should be given to practitioner research. Much of this could be funded through the literacy cost-shared grants. Practitioners could, with some additional training and resources, incorporate research into their program activity as an ongoing way of critically examining and reflecting on their practice.

The groups suggested that:

- ❑ the conversation be continued through the B.C. literacy electronic network
- ❑ opportunities for training be utilized – for example, the upcoming Literacy B.C. Summer Institute will feature a one-week course on action research

- ❑ an event be held in the fall of 1998 to bring together practitioners and researchers to explore more fully the various research options and to prepare for research activities

Problem-posing practical research can be a reality in BC. By working together, we can nurture the process, build a network of interested practitioners and researchers, enhance our professional development, provide a basis for collaborative processes in different areas of the province, and improve our practice. This is an exciting challenge!

Copies of the handouts and notes from the November Round Table and the February 6 event can be obtained from Literacy BC.

Where to find out more about action research

An interesting website is: <http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/AHE/ae501/framepg.htm>. This is a course on action research out of the University of Alberta designed by long-time literacy practitioner Mary Norton. The references are all links to other websites on the topic of action research.

An interesting resource is: *Creating Practical Knowledge, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, Number 73, Spring 1997* (B. Allan Quigley, & Gary W. Kuhne, Editors).

Gzowski to Host Two B.C. Literacy Fundraisers

VANCOUVER **RADIO CABARET with** **Peter Gzowski**

Popular CBC radio broadcaster Peter Gzowski will host a concert in Vancouver in May, with the net proceeds going to Literacy B.C.

The Radio Cabaret with Peter Gzowski is one of a series of six concerts Gzowski will host across the country this spring to raise funds for Canadian literacy. The concerts will become a series of national radio programs on CBC (Radio One).

The Vancouver **Radio Cabaret** will take place **Wednesday, May 13 at 8 p.m.** at the Vogue Theatre. Tickets are available at all Ticketmaster outlets.

VICTORIA **Writes of Spring**

Peter Gzowski will also be Master of Ceremonies at the **READ Festival: Victoria READ Society's 7th Annual Poetry Reading**. It will take place Friday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m., at the Victoria Conference Centre Theatre.

All proceeds go towards the Dorothy Livesay Bursary to help children attend Victoria READ Society classes.

To date, the concert lineup includes:

Barney Bentall, Long John Baldry, Brazilian guitarist Celso Machado, 1998 Juno award-winners, The Paperboys, and popular B.C. entertainer, Valdy.

Poet/author **George Bowering**, and television host **Vicki Gabereau**, will also join in the celebration as special guests.

Gzowski says he's especially looking forward to the Vancouver concert. "As well as raising money for a cause I care deeply about, the concerts will do one of the things I think Morningside did best — bring people together to celebrate their own artists, and show off to the whole country what places like Vancouver can produce."

For the Ticketmaster outlet nearest you, call (604) 280-4444.

Poets this year are: Lorna Crozier, John Gould, Patrick Lane, Susan Musgrave, P.K. Page, Al Purdy, Stephen Reid, Bill Richardson, Linda Rogers, and others.

Tickets are \$25 and \$15. Call:

Victoria READ Society
720 Linden Avenue
Victoria
Phone: (250) 388-7225





The Co-operators 1998 Provincial Learner Achievement Award

We are pleased to announce a generous new sponsor for this very special award. **The Co-operators**, a national insurance company, is proud to sponsor the **Provincial Learner Achievement Award** which recognizes the outstanding achievements of an adult learner in B.C.

The \$200 award will be presented at the 1998 Literacy B.C. Annual General Meeting in October. The winner will be announced at this year's PGI golf tournament in July.

To be eligible for the **Co-operators Learner Achievement Award**, the learner must:

- ☐ have attended a literacy/ABE program for at least six months, and preferably a year
- ☐ have an excellent attendance record
- ☐ obtain a recommendation from a teacher or tutor
- ☐ have shown exceptional progress in his or her studies

Deadline for applications is **June 20, 1998**.

The winner will be chosen by a committee of adult learners.

Contact Literacy B.C. for application forms.



Golf Tournaments for Literacy
Founded by Peter Gzowski

THE PGI RETURNS!

The 1998 PGI will be held
Thursday, July 9 at the University
Golf Club (Vancouver).

To register, contact Literacy B.C.



NEWS FROM LITERACY B.C.

SKI FOR LITERACY '98

gratefully acknowledges our supporters



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Wild Willie's Ski Club

To our celebrity skiers, our volunteers and all our skiers...THANK YOU!!

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who have recently donated to Literacy B.C.

Donors: The Book Club, Cathy Grant, Stewart Family Fund, Deanna Sordi

Contributors: Patti Barnes, Susan Browne, Robert Evans, Grant Richards, Randi Robin, Joan W. Rhodes, United Way of the Lower Mainland



Join us on the mountaintop this summer...

The 1998 Summer Literacy Institute, hosted by Literacy B.C., will take place at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby Campus, from July 12 - 25, 1998.

There are seven courses offered over the two-week period. Participants in the Institute will be able to attend one course per week.

A series of ten afternoon workshops will also be offered, at no additional cost to course participants. If you attend the afternoon workshops only, there is a registration fee.

Registration is limited to 25 for each course, so register early. Workshops will accommodate up to 60 people.

**The deadline for registration is
May 25, 1998.**

A brochure with full details on courses, workshops and presenters will be available in mid-April.

To register or receive the brochure, call Jean Ramussen, Projects Manager at (toll-free) 1-800-663-1293.

COURSES July 13 - 17

- ☐ An Introduction to Family Literacy.
Instructor: Barbara Bate
- ☐ Volunteer Tutor Coordinator Training. Instructors: Paula Davies/ Maureen Stephens
- ☐ Building a Literacy Program Based on a Popular Education Model.
Instructor: Carmen Rodriguez

COURSES July 20 - 24

- ☐ Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS) Training.
Instructor: Elaine Cairns
- ☐ Managing Volunteers: An Overview.
Instructors from Volunteer Vancouver
- ☐ Learning from Practice: Posing Problems, Solving Problems and Creating New Knowledge Through Action Research.
Instructor: Allan Quigley
- ☐ Learning and Reading Partners: Making a Connection. Instructors: Maitland MacIsaac/Nancy Estey

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

- ☐ July 14 and 21: Making the Case for Literacy. Facilitators: Linda Mitchell/ Stacey Huget
- ☐ July 15 and 22: Creating Opportunities.
Facilitator: Stacey Huget
- ☐ July 16 and 20: Family Literacy: Children and Families Learning Together.
Presenter: Dr. Margie Mayfield
- ☐ July 17 and 20: Networking in Cyberspace. Facilitator: Sandy Middleton
- ☐ July 21: Barriers to Learning: Disability Issues. Guest speakers
- ☐ July 22: Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and Portfolio Development.
Facilitator: Chelene Koenig
- ☐ July 23: Phonological Awareness and the Process of Learning to Read.
Facilitator: Joyce Cameron

C²T² Hosts Conferences...

CONNECTIONS '98

B R I D G I N G T H E G A P

Teaching • Learning • Technology

The Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology

May 10 - 13, 1998

Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre and Hotel Vancouver

Offers four keynote speakers and a choice of over 120 concurrent sessions

Interactive demonstrations and hands-on workshops

Conference Streams:

- ☐ tools for teaching and learning ☐ coping with change and technology
- ☐ cultural and social implications of technology ☐ student support services
- ☐ institutional planning

Check out the conference website: <http://www.ctt.bc.ca/edtech/etconnex.html>

Or call: Rosemary Scanlon, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology

Phone (250) 413-4471 (fax) (250) 413-4403 email: connections98@ctt.bc.ca

Designing Cutting Edge Programs for Adult Learners

MAY 21 - 22, 1998

Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre

Two one-day workshops with Cal Crow, Ph.D. Co-founder, Center for Career and Work-Related Education

Contact: Marguerite McCallion at (250) 413-4446 or mmcailion@cct.bc.ca

Faith ... Hope ... Compassion...

Allan Quigley is an Associate Professor of Adult Education at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. He has over 20 years experience as a literacy teacher, programmer and policy adviser in Canada and the U.S. The following is part of a speech he gave after receiving an award from the Commission on Adult and Basic Education (COABE) at the 1997 COABE annual conference in Detroit. It is reprinted courtesy of *Literacy Across the Curriculum*, Vol. 13 No.2, 1997.

Professor Quigley will teach a course on action research at the 1998 Summer Literacy Institute.

For many years I've constantly been asked the same question – by friends, neighbours, strangers sitting beside me in airplanes. They ask: "What is adult education?"

.... I've been thinking that it would be much more meaningful – more useful – if we were to think about what adult education "means." Rather than what adult education "is," we might ask why people in this field get up each morning and do this work. We might ask why we are the last ones out of the building each night. We could well ask ourselves why this work of ours matters. And why do we do it at all?

I've come to the conclusion that the answer to the meaning of adult literacy education lies in the special characteristics that are found in people who make up this field – not in the descriptions of what programs allegedly "are." And....I think there are three salient characteristics found in this field which are not found anywhere else with such depth.

First, I think this field has an abiding and enduring sense of faith. Faith in the capacity of people to change. Faith in the ability of people to be more than they are. And, above all, faith in the power of the word – the printed word, the written word, the spoken word – to unlock the secrets of the universe. It is a small fragile thing, but we have faith that the word can enable people to change – ourselves included.

Second, this is a field filled with hope. We are hopelessly hopeful. We hope that our students will come back next week. We hope we will have a program next year. A budget next year. And a job next year. We hope that sometime – wouldn't it be nice to see in our lifetime – that governments would finally make a long-term commitment to funding for this field.

Finally and above all, this is a field founded and built on compassion. I don't think compassion is something that is learned. I don't know how it is taught. But I see it all the time in this field – freely given. It is a unique quality in adult literacy education I find nowhere else. And it is one reason why I love this field so much.

When you consider that the people who do this work often receive little or no pay; get little or no prestige in the world of education, or society, you realize that people do this work mainly because they care.

If faith, hope and charity – or what I want to call compassion in today's terms – sound quasi-religious, it's because I believe this field is not just a collection of courses. It is a calling. And, I have been privileged to be part of it....

*The following resources are available
on request from Literacy B.C.
while supplies last.*

Learners Talking to Learners

1997. Joyce Cameron and Janet Hall,
editors.

This collection is a first-hand account of the Learner Events held in approximately 30 B.C. communities last year. It provides a snapshot of learner activities from Vancouver Island to the Interior and from the Lower Mainland to northern B.C.

Some examples of these events: students learned about the Internet (Fraser Lake), visited museums (Fernie and Cranbrook), toured a native heritage centre (Duncan), and invited seniors from the community into their classroom (North Vancouver). Planning these events helped the participants learn computer, job-finding, organizational and communications skills, and write stories, poems, essays and resumes.

***For Adults About Adults By
Adults. Adventures in***

Learning. Stories by the Language
Arts Development Class, Invergarry
Learning Centre Literacy Program.

This booklet is a collection of stories about field trips the class made to various locations around the Lower Mainland, including the Surrey and Vancouver Public Libraries, Science World, the Surrey Recreation Centre and the Vancouver Game Farm.

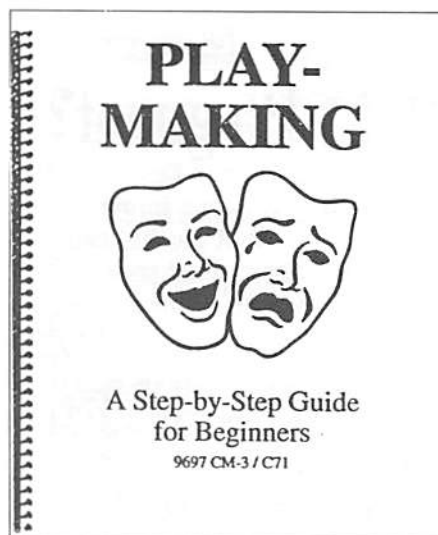
Visiting new places and writing about them gave us the chance to gather a collection of stories that other adult learners might enjoy. We hope these stories will be suitable for new readers and interesting to people who have not yet been able to visit some of the places that we were lucky enough to see. We hope adult learners will feel as encouraged reading our stories as we were writing them."

***Mentored Practicums: A Pilot
Project with Workplace
Educators (Final Report).***

Literacy B.C. and ABC CANADA.

Ten B.C. workplace educators participated in mentored practicums between January and June 1997, in a pilot project designed by Literacy B.C. and the Workplace Education Centre of ABC CANADA. The practicums were an extension of the Workplace Education Course offered at the 1996 Summer Literacy Institute.

Each practicum participant was paired with a workplace educator who has expertise in the participant's particular field of interest. The report includes a project-by-project description of the practicums and evaluations by participants. It will interest those responsible for professional development training in the workplace and anyone interested in a career in workplace education.



Play-Making. A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners. Project Literacy Victoria, 1997.

This how-to book sets out step-by-step the process used to write, rehearse and perform the play, "Just Plain Nuts -- No Offense," which was staged by three learners from Project Literacy Victoria on April 4, 1997. The project, coordinated by a Victoria drama therapist, was designed to illustrate the emotional problems experienced by learning disabled children with low literacy skills.

One member who took part in the project explains why she was willing to turn her own life story into theatre: *"I was always afraid at school, afraid of violent teachers and violent kids. I always felt confused. Just as I started to catch on to one idea the class moved on, and I was lost again. I quit after grade seven. I want to do this play to show other learners that if I can do it*

so can they. They are stronger and more capable than they realize. I'm a good example of that."

Playmaking examines why and how the learners chose to make theatre out of their life stories. A section called "Stage Talk" defines some commonly used theatre terms (cues, lighting, special effects); another describes how theatre is created ("playbuilding"). The script, written by the learners, is also included in the booklet.

Women with Children: Addressing the Barriers to Participation.

Northern Lights College, Chetwynd.

This project was originally designed to encourage women with children to access the existing under-used services in this northern B.C. community. The target group evolved to include anyone, with or without children, who was interested, and the project was adapted to "very concrete activities and tangible outcomes."

One such example was Community Kitchens. "Participating in these seemed to stimulate interest in short-term courses, upgrading, work, community involvement and taking other programs." The mother of one participant — "though she does not read or write... accompanied her daughter to a presentation by the community nutritionist at the college. The nutritionist had been informed ahead of time to adapt her session to a non-reading audience." Two participants became involved in the local playground and food bank, and others enrolled in Special Education at Northern Lights College.

More literacy news...

Calling all volunteer programs!

National Volunteer Week begins Monday, April 20 – a perfect opportunity for literacy groups across B.C. to recognize their volunteer tutors.



To help your organization recognize its volunteers, Literacy B.C. has a new supply of literacy symbol pins ready for shipping. If you would like to order pins in time for National Volunteer Week, please let us know now. Pins are \$1.10 each, with a \$5.00 discount for orders of more than 50. Call us at 1-800-663-1293.

How did Volunteer Week get started?

This special week is set aside to thank and honour the millions of Canadians who donate time and energy to volunteer causes. National Volunteer Week was first proclaimed in 1943 to draw public attention to the contribution that Canadian women were making to the war effort. In the 1960s, the focus was expanded to include all community volunteers. The Week is now firmly established as the highlight of the year for volunteer recognition.



Pregnant?

Did you know that alcohol can hurt your baby?



ENDORSED BY
THE DOCTORS, NURSES
AND MIDWIVES OF B.C.

BC FAS
RESOURCE
SOCIETY

A new brochure is available from the B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch on the risks of consuming alcohol while pregnant. The brochure – *Pregnant? Did you know that alcohol can hurt your baby?* – targets low-literacy groups with an easy-to-read format.

The brochure, developed in cooperation with the B.C. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Resource Society, Literacy B.C. and other community agencies, has been endorsed by the B.C. Medical Association. Posters are also available.

Literacy B.C. has a supply of both. Or, to place a bulk order, fax your name, address and quantity required to:

Anne Gilmour
Acting Manager, Social Responsibility
B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch
2625 Rupert Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5M 3T5
Fax: (604) 252-3044
Phone (604) 252-3038

Tax Credit Change Supports Learning Disabilities

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) says the federal government's move in the recent federal budget to improve tax assistance for persons with disabilities is a major breakthrough.

With changes to the Disability Tax Credit effective February 24, 1998, "psychologists and occupational therapists will be allowed to certify the existence of a severe and prolonged impairment with respect to an individual's ability to perceive, think and remember. Children and adults with learning disabilities clearly fit within this category..."

The LDAC advises persons wishing to apply for the tax credit to contact a psychologist or accountant to assist them through the process.

The LDAC will continue to advocate for more eligible medical expenses on the income tax form, including the cost of assessments, tutoring, materials, supplies for remedial activities and other items.

"The government of Canada must now take the next step and recognize that parents of children with learning disabilities must invest in expensive materials as well as speech, tutoring and/or other services to help their child cope with the activities of daily living."

Other changes announced in the budget:

❑ A revised Education Credit, formerly restricted to full-time students, will now apply to part-time students as well. These students will be allowed to claim \$60 for each month they are enrolled in a course lasting at least three weeks and involving a minimum of 12 hours course work per month.

❑ Wage subsidies of up to \$10,000 to give Canadian youth work experience in the private and voluntary sectors to prepare them for long-term employment. This program includes career counselling, and where required, literacy upgrading.

For more information, contact:

Learning Disabilities Association of B.C.
Vancouver Chapter
#909 -- 750 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1H1
Phone: (604) 873-8139 Fax: (604) 873-8140

The International Dyslexia
Association B.C. Branch
20th Annual Conference

***Working Together:
Building Bridges for
Reading Success***

May 2, 1998

Sheraton Guildford Hotel, Surrey
Two keynote speakers and a variety of
workshops

Contact: Sharon Vipond
International Dyslexia Association of B.C.
#205-13766 72nd Avenue, Surrey, B.C.
(604) 591-1002

The back page ...

Looking for Free Books?

We are currently weeding our library collection. We have extra copies of some interesting resources to give away – free for the asking. We have prepared a list of what is available – call us to find out what we've got.

Don't miss this opportunity to add to your library!

Who We Are

Our mission is to support literacy learners, to develop community partnerships, and to present a united voice on literacy. We are supported by the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; Human Resources Development Canada, National Literacy Secretariat; memberships; and donations.

Here's how you can reach us:

Literacy B.C.
622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Phone: 1-800-663-1293 toll free in B.C.
(604) 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland
Fax: (604) 684-8520 Email: literacy_bc@douglas.bc.ca
WWW: <http://www.nald.ca/lbc.htm>

Donations to Literacy B.C. are tax deductible.